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# In Memoriam.



HON. HENRY M. SPOFFORD.

1880

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## IN MEMORIAM.

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### HENRY M. SPOFFORD.

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[From the Pulaski (Tenn.) Citizen, Aug. 26, 1880.]

ON last Wednesday a telegram summoned Major J. B. Stacy and Dr. C. C. Abernathy to Cincinnati, conveying also the sad information that Judge H. M. SPOFFORD was thought to be dying at Red Sulphur Springs, West Va. They left on the next train, and met Mrs. Spofford in Cincinnati, where she has been for several weeks, and proceeded thence to Judge SPOFFORD's bedside, but before they arrived death came to relieve him of suffering. He expired at 8 o'clock Friday morning, Aug. 20, of abscess of the liver.

Judge H. M. SPOFFORD was born in Gilmanton, N. H., Sept. 8, 1821. He was a graduate—with highest honors—of Amherst College, Massachusetts, and located in Shreveport, La., in 1845, and at once entered upon the practice of law. He early gave promise of a brilliant future, and rapidly rose at the bar. In 1854 he was elected to the Supreme Bench of Louisiana, and filled that exalted station with signal credit until he resigned in 1858, returning to the practice of his profession and to the achievement of those honors which cluster so thickly about his name and make his memory imperishable. Possessing great wealth, and having risen to the highest attainable eminence in his profession, politics had little that could allure him; he nevertheless accepted an election to the United States Senate, in 1877, by the Nicholls Legislature. How he was cheated of his office by the Republican Senate, and how a Democratic Senate has signally disgraced itself by fail-

ing to undo that great wrong, are known to the public. He never once wavered in his struggle before the Senate, pursuing it, as he has told us, because he thought it due to the people who had elected him that he should devote all his energies to securing the office for them. It is a matter of little doubt that the heavy weight of this great wrong upon his mind, and the harassing cares of a prosecution he never permitted to waver, hastened his death at so unfortunate a juncture.

Judge SPOFFORD was united in marriage with Miss Ophelia Martin, daughter of our late honored citizen, Thomas Martin, Esq., in 1860. To them were born three children, all of whom are yet living.

Judge SPOFFORD left New Orleans on the 18th of March last and came to Pulaski, when he was almost immediately taken down with the disease that has harassed him for two years—a liver complaint. He lay for some time at the point of death, but skillful treatment baffled the disease to that extent that he was able in a few weeks to go to Bailey Springs, where he spent two or three weeks, and returned better. About a month ago he went to Cincinnati to consult physicians, and from thence went to Red Sulphur Springs, West Va., in company with his son, where his earthly career closed.

On last Tuesday morning, at 11 o'clock, the remains of Judge SPOFFORD arrived in Pulaski by special car, accompanied by Mrs. Spofford and her son Thomas, with Mrs. George Martin, a widow of a brother of Thomas Martin, deceased, and her son, Mr. Martin, of Columbia, Hon. Ainsworth R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress, Dr. C. C. Abernathy, Mr. Hugh C. Topp, and Major J. B. Stacy. The train was met at the depot by several hundred of our people, and the remains were taken in charge by the pall-bearers appointed at a meeting of our citizens the day before. The procession moved slowly to the late residence of Major Hugh F. Ewing, on First Street, which had been fitted up for the reception of the family (their residence on Second Street being in process of repairs), where the remains were deposited until 5 o'clock, when they were conveyed to the M. E. Church. Out of respect for the eminent dead, and under a proclamation of the Mayor, all business was suspended, and Pulaski *en masse* drooped its head in solemn

sorrow in homage and love for the great man thus brought low by the grim hand of death. At the M. E. Church, at 5 o'clock, one of the largest audiences ever assembled in Pulaski met to pay the last sad tribute of respect to the mortal remains of the honored dead. The pulpit and altar had been elaborately draped in mourning, in testimony of sorrow, and Dr. W. M. Leftwich pronounced the most touchingly beautiful and profound funeral oration we ever heard upon such an occasion. It abounded in grand thoughts and lessons drawn from the eminent success and faultless life of the deceased, and was a lofty tribute to his memory.

At 6:15 the *cortege* started for the New Cemetery, where the last sad rites were said, the bitterest tears dropped, and the mortal remains of HENRY M. SPOFFORD were deposited in the spacious family vault, close beside those of the family gone before.

Thus has passed away forever one of the grandest men of the times. Profound in all the sciences, versed in literature and history, eminent in law and politics, and grand in all, he stood the peer of the greatest.

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#### MEETING OF THE CITIZENS.

Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the citizens of Pulaski and Giles county was called at the Court-house on Saturday evening, Aug. 21, 1880, to pass suitable resolutions relative to the death of the Hon. H. M. SPOFFORD. On motion, Col. Solon E. Rose was elected Chairman, and Charles P. Jones, Secretary. The following resolutions were then presented by the Hon. Thomas M. Jones:

WHEREAS, The painful intelligence has reached us of the death of the Hon. H. M. SPOFFORD, who, although a citizen of the State of Louisiana, has for many years lived a portion of his time in the town of Pulaski, and by his gentlemanly bearing and urbane deportment endeared himself to our citizens:

*Be it resolved*, As a testimonial of the high regard we cherished for him when living, and the esteem and respect in which we hold his memory, that a committee, consisting of twelve citizens, be appointed by the Chairman of this meeting to act as pall-bearers to meet the remains at the depot, and to escort the same to his residence, and such place as may be designated for the funeral service.

2. That our deepest sympathies are hereby tendered to his bereaved widow and family.

*Be it farther resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions, signed by the Chairman and Secretary, be sent to Mrs. Spofford, and furnished the Pulaski press for publication.

These resolutions, on motion, were unanimously adopted.

In accordance with the above resolutions, the following gentlemen were appointed as pall-bearers, to wit: Thomas M. Jones, John A. Tinnon, J. N. Patterson, W. H. Abernathy, J. B. Childers, P. H. Ezell, A. J. Abernathy, John S. Wilkes, W. P. Ballentine, T. M. N. Jones, E. B. Buford, and M. Childress.

On motion, the Chairman and Secretary were also appointed as pall-bearers.

There being no farther business, the meeting adjourned *sine die*.

S. E. ROSE, *Chairman*.

CHARLES P. JONES, *Secretary*.

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#### THE CITY COUNCIL.

Upon call of the Mayor, the Aldermen met at his office on Tuesday morning. Present: Mayor Crow, Aldermen Childers, McLean, Finley, Jackson, Townsend, and Recorder Winship. The following resolutions were then adopted:

WHEREAS, We have received the painful intelligence of the death of the Hon. HENRY M. SPOFFORD, whose courtesy and gentlemanly bearing endeared him to all who knew him; therefore, be it resolved by the Mayor and Aldermen of the town of Pulaski—

1. That in the death of the Hon. H. M. SPOFFORD we have lost an esteemed and valuable citizen.

2. That we tender to the family of the deceased our sincere sympathy and condolence.

3. That, as a testimonial of the high regard we entertain for the character of the deceased, and the esteem and respect we cherish for his memory, we will attend his funeral, and accompany his remains to the cemetery.

4. That the proprietors of all business-houses be requested to close the same at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

5. That a copy of these proceedings be furnished the widow of the deceased, and published in the *Pulaski Citizen* and *Herald*.

## FUNERAL DISCOURSE

OVER THE REMAINS OF THE HON. HENRY M. SPOFFORD.  
DELIVERED IN THE METHODIST CHURCH IN  
PULASKI, TENN., AUGUST 24, 1880.

BY THE REV. W. M. LEFTWICH, D.D.

PHILOSOPHY turns to folly in the presence of grief. The shadow of death upon the heart obscures the perception of truth, and defers candid criticism. Not until Time, the great healer, has soothed the sorrow and lifted the shadow can philosophy be true to itself, and turn its unsparing lights upon the subject of its analysis.

To the profound thinker the philosophy of life is better than its facts, and the principles are of more value than the products. Facts only illustrate philosophy, and products declare principles. Life reaches its highest significance in the character it forms, and philosophy finds its richest and ripest subject in the analysis of character. It is not the genealogy, not the biography, not the personal history, not the facts, and fruits, and forces of life, that most deeply and vitally concern us, but the *character* that rises up out of them, and apart from which they cannot be studied. Hence it is that history hesitates until philosophy interprets for us the genius of humanity, and translates into common principles the subtle spirit of representative life; then the right point of view is given, and the history of the world becomes the biography of its great men.

Men are representative of ideas and principles. By some occult law of our nature each man becomes the agent and interpreter of those ideas and principles which, by assimilation, have become a part of his consciousness, and which have been crystallized into his character. Ideas and principles—from whatever system of truth evolved—are valuable to us only as they can become vital in consciousness and character. Hence, the various systems of philosophy and science, as well as the religions and civilizations of men, are valuable and vital only in the character they produce, and the comfort and culture they bring; and the ultimate value of each human life is to be estimated by the grade of character it produces, and the extent of its usefulness. If it be true that each material thing has its celestial side, its translation through humanity into the spiritual and the invisible, how much grander the truth that the spiritual and the divine have their translation through the higher forms of human character into the visible kingdom of God, converting fallen men into sons of God and heirs of everlasting life!

Looking thus at human life, we are profoundly affected when its earthly biography closes, and its product is before us in the highest type of representative character. If we study the personal history, and measure the great achievements of a successful life, it is that we may rightly estimate the character, and possess ourselves, for practical uses, of the ideas and principles which the character represents and interprets for us.

Now, when the present pall passes away, and the dark shadows are lifted from our hearts, then will the life of HENRY M. SPROFFORD—studied in the light of these principles of social science—stand up in the history of our country, a character of remarkable symmetry and solidity, of

exceptional purity and polish, full and finished in all the essential elements of the highest and noblest manhood.

He was born in Gilmanton, N. H., in 1821; graduated at Amherst College, Massachusetts, in 1840, and was a member of the Faculty of his *Alma Mater* from 1840 to 1842. Quitting New Hampshire, he went to Louisiana, where he taught school, and read law, until 1845, when he opened a law office in Shreveport, in partnership with Judge Olcott. His professional integrity, ability, and learning, soon placed him at the head of his profession, attracted to him a lucrative practice, and received substantial recognition by his State. In 1853 he removed to New Orleans, and in 1854—when he had barely reached the constitutional age—he was placed upon the Supreme Bench of the State of Louisiana, to succeed Judge John A. Campbell, resigned. In this capacity he served his State and country until 1858, when he resigned and resumed the practice of his profession. It was after occupying this high position of honor and trust that he met and married his now bereaved widow. His profound legal learning and discriminating judicial mind made him one of the ablest and safest jurists of the country. His name is conspicuously associated with the history of the jurisprudence of his State, and will go down to posterity as that of a profound jurist. Future generations will study his character and wisdom in the great questions of constitutional law settled in his judicial decisions, which will constitute a monument to his fame as enduring as the laws and language of his race. But not alone as a Supreme Judge has he written his name upon the high scroll of fame, but also in the successful prosecution of his profession. Life's greatness and grandeur, as seen by men, consists in its material products which bless and benefit mankind; for it is still true that



We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs: he most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

We come to-day, friends, not to weep only, but to study the lessons of a successful life—success measured by high achievements—achievements in professional and general knowledge, in ripe scholarship, in profound learning, in social and æsthetic culture, in literary finish and exquisite taste, in wisdom, fortune, and fame; but above all, and better than all, stands the *character*; gentle, refined, cultured, chaste, polished, solid, balanced, rounded, complete in all the higher possibilities of God's noblest work—a model gentleman. “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” Man's greatest achievement is to rule himself, and resolve the mighty forces of his nature into a well-poised, well-matured Christian character.

As executor of the large estate of his deceased father-in-law, Mr. Thomas Martin, Judge SPOFFORD spent much of the past several years in this community and county, without removing his citizenship from Louisiana, or breaking up his home in New Orleans. While thus incidentally connected with this community we have learned to know him, to love him, to honor him, and to appreciate in him a character which combined so many of the refinements of culture and the chaste amenities of the social gentleman. His life has touched ours, his character has toned ours, his presence has blessed us, and his death has bereft us. This vast concourse of citizens, of all ranks and conditions, bowed in silent grief, attest the general and genuine sorrow over the distinguished dead, and the genuine and general sympathy for the grief-smitten living.



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In 1877 he was elected by the Legislature of Louisiana to a seat in the United States Senate. From this seat he was excluded by an opposing party majority. It would not become this place, nor this sad occasion, to review the history of that contest. It is sufficient to state that when the question was re-opened, after a long, patient, and thorough investigation of the case, a majority of the Committee on Privileges and Elections reported him justly entitled to his seat. Pending the discussion of this report the Senate adjourned, and now death has put an end to all the questions to which he was personally a party. Though deprived of the seat to which he was elected, his name became widely known and respected, both North and South, as one of the most conservative, courageous, generous, learned, and eloquent, of those citizens of the old Whig school, who have in later years acted with the Democratic party. His speech before the Committee on Privileges and Elections in his own cause won for him the highest personal regard, and placed him before the country not only as a learned jurist, but as a wise and conservative statesman, the peer of the wisest and the greatest. His name will ever be associated in history with this the highest honor which his State could confer upon him, and of which neither Returning Boards nor party majorities can ever deprive him. His name belongs to his country, and his country will take care of his political history and character. The essential honor of this high achievement has been greatly enhanced by the high-toned spirit and manly bearing he has maintained through all the long and bitter discussions of the case. His sensitive nature, writhing under a sense of the great injustice done him, making deeper and keener the many and great provocations to resentment, yet his perfect self-control and magnificent equipoise have disclosed the real nobil-

ity and greatness of the man more than any other chapter in his history. From this contest all the finer instincts of his nature recoiled as from an infection. It was a perpetual torture to his refined sensibilities, which he endured solely for the sake of the fundamental principle of constitutional government which he represented. The right of a State to be represented in the Senate of the United States, and to elect its own Senators by a legally chosen and recognized Legislature, is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. It was only as the representative of his State, in defending this vital principle of constitutional law, that he consented to maintain a contest which involved so much that was foreign to his tastes and crucifying to his feelings, and which may have hastened his death. But it would have been contrary to the ruling spirit of his whole life to surrender a vital principle in which the rights of others were involved; rather would he sacrifice his own liberty and life. Fidelity to principle, as distinguished from policy, made him heroic in life and tranquil in death.

A character which combined so many elements of true greatness, and which was sustained so wisely and well in the highest conditions of a noble manhood, must yield many lessons of wisdom, both to the profession in which he was a shining light, and to the young men of the country, for whom he is a high model.

In studying the lessons of a successful life, we encounter the fact that the history of the world is the biography of successful men. If he made the most of his profession, getting wisdom, learning, fortune, and fame out of it, and reaching its highest possibilities in his own State, it was due to the fact that his professional history was only the expression of his personal and professional character. A man's history can never be separated from his character, nor can

we study them apart. A successful career is only a man's character in action. Opportunities given, the conditions of success must be found in the elements of character which a philosophical analysis alone can reveal. In Judge Spofford's character we have as conditions of success—

1. *Self-reliance*.—There may have been nothing heroic in his boyhood, but the force and fire of his young manhood threw him up and out, away from home and friends, to make the battle of life among strangers, and to carve out his own fortune with his own unaided right arm. In such fields the grandest men of the race have laid the foundations of character upon which fortune and fame depend. The self-reliance and self-confidence acquired in the earlier struggles of life, in the earlier settlements of Louisiana, were far more to him in the after-achievements of life, and contributed more to life's success, than any inherited fortune and position. All great men are *self-made*.

2. *Decision of Character*.—Success is not fortuitous. Great achievements are not accidental; they are the products of decision, purpose, power. Strong, sustained character, is not the product of casual and diverse impulses, nor of the drifting influences of society, but of one steady and sustained purpose, which absorbs the whole being, and holds the impulses and forces of the whole life true to itself with a decision of character as unwavering as the truth, and as unchangeable as the eternal principles which supply the inspiration for all truly great men.

3. *Self-control*.—The whole measure of human passion is not too much to supply the interest, the energy, and the enthusiasm, necessary to the highest effort. Young life is weakened, and often wasted, in the undue indulgence of the passions, and records its shameful weakness in the history of dubious musings, abortive resolutions, fickle fancies, and

foolish failures. But life grows stalwart and grand only under the self-control which commands all of its vital forces, and delivers them with precision and power upon one great purpose. The sad history of failure, which so often disappoints and crushes mature manhood, is written in the self-indulgence of youth. Self-control, acquired early, and used severely, gives—

4. *Force of character*—which lifts the resolute above the too common incumbrance of mere hangers-on. Impertinence is always obtrusive, and too many friends modify, if they do not defeat, success. The strong have to carry many dead-weights, while weakness invites arrogance. The earnest man often has occasion to wish himself possessed of a character with which stupidity and impertinence could not make so free. Many a generous life has wasted itself on unprofitable friends; while the firm, heroic, self-poised spirit, possessing positive force of character, has seen the spaces clear around him, and the incumbrances fall off, leaving him room and freedom. An earnest man has not more time to waste on profitless friends than passion to spend in youthful indulgences and irresolute purposes. The path to signal success is so beset with difficulties, and so obstructed by opposition, that none but the self-reliant, determined, heroic spirit, in command of all the vital forces of his nature, concentrated upon one purpose and one pursuit, can pass on and up to the sublime goal.

To all these elements of success Judge SPOFFORD added moral courage, systematic application, energy, self-confidence, conscious integrity, and professional fidelity, which, reposing upon the basis of a substantial physical manhood, sustained the impelling power of a nervous force equal to the highest intellectual efforts and the utmost physical endurance. He was thus lifted, by the happy combination

of physical, intellectual, and moral forces, above the common mass, and placed upon a pedestal of exceptional excellence, which commands the admiration and homage of men.

With these elements of character sustained through life, he would have been successful in any position or pursuit. But other conditions contributed to his success in his chosen profession, which we would do well to note. And,

1. *His profession absorbed him.* It was his meat and drink—his life and love. It consumed him like a passion, and, like all great passions, it refused to be divided. He turned aside for nothing; admitted no divided interest; listened to no alluring promises. When earnestness becomes an enthusiasm, success is limited only by the impossible.

2. He carried with him the sense of the *gravest responsibility*. A man's life-work will never be better than his ideal. Judge SPOFFORD saw in the legal profession not so much money, but so much professional honor, integrity, and fidelity to the responsible trusts confided to an attorney at law, out of which came his professional character, and apart from which professional character was impossible.

3. He possessed *legal learning*. He was no smatterer. Few men surpassed him in the knowledge of law, its history, its principles, and its practice. His first business was to master the civil law of his adopted State, which differs essentially from that of any other State, and which required a knowledge of Roman law, with all of its ancient history and maxims. This fact may, in some sort, account for the classic mold of his thought, and style, and manners. But his learning compassed the entire range of his profession with a thoroughness and accuracy rarely equaled. Besides, his researches extended into almost every field of

knowledge, making his general information extensive and reliable.

4. He was a superior *judge of law*. Possessed of a fine legal mind, with rare powers of discrimination, it is not surprising that his opinions were widely sought, and his decisions of final authority. As counselor, advocate, and judge, he knew not the cunning of the shyster, nor the mean advantage of the unscrupulous. His was an open, manly, professional character, honorable alike to the legal profession and to our common humanity.

Some years ago William Arthur wrote a book which he called "The Successful Merchant," taking for his subject not an ideal but a real character. If I had to write a book to be called "The Successful Lawyer," I would take for the hero and the model, HENRY M. STOFFORD.

But what shall I say of him as *a man* in the private and social relations of life? He was so gentle and generous, so kind and considerate, so polite and polished, so chaste and elegant in feeling, language, and bearing, that he was the charm of every social circle, and the center and soul of domestic life. A courtly gentleman, a kind neighbor, a generous friend, an affectionate husband, an indulgent father. But I forbear to enter the charmed home circle where his domestic life and love run the deepest, and his milder, and softer, and holier virtues shone the brightest. This is holy ground, upon which common sandals should never tread. Rude words should never break upon the holy places of such love, such grief. No vulgar stare of gaping crowds should be permitted to shock the wounded sensibilities which appeal to us in the silence of this sacred sorrow. How sad that every heart must have its own bitterness, every house its own skeleton, every paradise its own blighting, every garden its own sepulcher!



But so it is, since "sin came into the world, and death by sin."

That such a life should pass away, leaving such broken hearts behind, in such a desolate home, is but the repetition of the old, old story of death and dust. But if we have found lessons in his life, we should also hear the voices of admonition in his death, the most impressive of which comes down to us from the mountain wilds of West Virginia, where the last summons found him. To die at home is a great mercy, but to die in mountain solitudes is solemn, sublime. Alone with his son, and attended by strangers, he met the last enemy, and conquered as he fell. His manly courage, Christian philosophy, and sublime faith, sustained him in that hour; softened his pillow, reposed his soul, and supplied the rod and staff for the last dark valley.

The "after-glow" which lingers upon the earth long after the sun has gone to rest, converting the summer twilight into a scene of ethereal beauty, is not more heavenly and hopeful of a bright to-morrow than was the celestial radiance which, gathered from all the beneficent ministries of a well-spent life, and suffused with the soft glow of divine light and love, transfigured his face before he expired, relighting it with the beauty of youth, which lingered long after the noble heart was still, and death had claimed his victim. There is heart in such a life, and hope in such a death. Life is a scale of degrees. Between rank and rank of our great men are wide intervals—intervals not of time and place, but of character; and each character represents its own system of ideas, and interprets for us its own phenomena of life. No man has a successor, but each stands alone in a separate and distinct individuality. He comes and goes, fulfilling his mission and ministry, and passes on into the Forever. *His* place is never filled. Nature never

repeats herself. God never duplicates his work. When these golden suns sink below the evening horizon, we look in vain for their return. Other orbs will float above the horizon, resplendent with the light of life, but he whom we mourn to-day will come not.

This is the state of man ; to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him ;  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost ;  
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening—nips his root,  
And then he falls.











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